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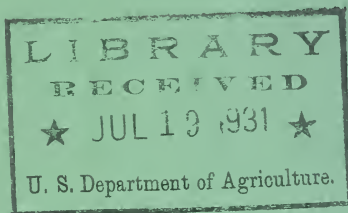
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The Hybrid Watsonia

by Theodore Payne

Los Angeles, Calif.

1929



The Hybrid Watsonia

ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY

BY
THEODORE PAYNE



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SEEDSMAN, NURSERYMAN
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THE WATSONIA is a native of South Africa, where about thirty species are found. It was named in honor of Sir William Watson, M.D., 1715-1787, professor of botany at Chelsea, England. It belongs to Iridaceae or the Iris family, and is sometimes known by the common name of Bugle Lily, but the name *Watsonia* is now preferred.

Watsonia angusta, a species with orange scarlet flowers, has been grown in California for a long time. Later on came *Watsonia merriana*, a pink-flowered species, and *Watsonia ardernei* (*W. merriana alba*), the White *Watsonia*. It is from this source that the present wonderful colors and types of flowers have been developed, for which full credit is due to Mrs. J. H. Bullard of Los Angeles.

In 1904 Mrs. Bullard, being an enthusiastic amateur horticulturalist, became interested in the culture and development of the *Watsonia*. Having in her garden some plants of *Watsonia angusta* and *Watsonia ardernei*, she cross-pollinated these two. The seeds produced from this cross were carefully saved and planted. The young plants grew and in due course of time (about three years) they flowered, producing several new shades, of which five were selected and grown separately. Of these, she named one *Ansonia*, after her own son Anson. *Clementina* and *Rose* were named after sisters. *Alberti* was named after a musician. While the fifth was given the name of *Madame Modjeska* in honor of the great tragedienne, who was an intimate friend of Mrs. Bullard's family. These five varieties were described and placed on the market for Mrs. Bullard by Theodore Payne in 1912 and 1913, and were described in the fall bulb catalogues for those years, constituting the first introduction of hybrid *Watsonias* to the public.

Mrs. Bullard continued crossing and selecting her hybrids, and new colors appeared, among which were many delightful shades of pink, rose, salmon, buff, lilac, mauve, magenta cream and white. A marked improvement in the shape and size of the flowers also appeared; some being distinctly star-shaped, others cup-shaped, and many with large open flowers with broad petals. In some instances the flowers were arranged closely and evenly on the spike, while in others they were placed loosely on the stems, producing a graceful, airy effect. There also appeared quite a difference in the growth and habit of the plants some being tall, others medium, and some decidedly dwarf. The time of blooming also varied, some varieties flowering early, many coming in at the same time, and others were distinctly late bloomers.

To some it may seem strange that Mrs. Bullard, starting with only two colors, scarlet and white, was able to produce such a great number of shades. This, however, is more easily explained when it is remembered that the White *Watsonia* (*W. ardernei*) is simply a white-flowered form of *Watsonia merriana*, a pink-flowered species. Thus, though Mrs. Bullard only had the scarlet and white flowered plants in her garden, the latter had the pink blood of *W. merriana* in its veins, which is responsible for the great variety of colors in her hybrids.

In 1918, seven more varieties were offered for sale by Theodore Payne, and in 1919 another five were

added, making a total of twelve new varieties, namely: Aurora, Edward D. Sturtevant, Estrella, Eunice, Harry Johnson, Hazel, Victory, James MacGillivray, J. J. Dean, Marion Welsh, Fanny Lyon, and Theodore Payne. These varieties, together with many later introductions of Mrs. Bullard's, have been grown extensively by Theodore Payne and now constitute the largest stock of named hybrid Watsonias in the world.

General Description

The Watsonia is closely related to the gladiolus and is similar in some respects, such as the shape and size of the bulb, foliage, and general habit of growth. In the Watsonia, however, the plants grow taller, ranging from three to six feet in height. The flowers are smaller, but produced in much greater numbers, and are more delicate and graceful both in color and form. The flowers, instead of all facing one way as in the gladiolus, are arranged on the spike in such a way as to face in opposite directions.

After the main spike has blossomed, several smaller side spikes are produced, and it is quite common to have a total of fifty to sixty flowers on a single stem. Thus the flowers appear over a much longer period than the gladiolus, thereby giving the Watsonia a decided advantage both in the garden and when used as a cut flower. In the latter use they have a remarkable lasting quality, it being not at all unusual for them to stand for a period of ten days in water when properly cared for.

Cultural Notes

The Watsonia is just as easy to grow as the gladiolus, and will succeed in any good garden soil, to which should be added a liberal dressing of well-rotted manure. The bulbs may be planted any time from the end of August to the early part of November. Prepare the ground by spading to a depth of ten or twelve inches. Plant the bulbs eight to ten inches apart and about five inches deep in light soils, or four inches deep in heavy soils. The plants will bloom the following spring. In the eastern states, Watsonias may be grown in pots and used for forcing.



Examples of the many types of flowers to be found in the Bullard Hybrid Watsonias

MRS. BULLARD'S *New* HYBRID WATSONIAS

Named Varieties

America. An exquisite shade of soft rose pink, faintly flushed with lilac and salmon. Large bold flowers with broad, slightly crinkled petals. The upper blossoms frequently come with eight instead of six petals; medium height. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Ansonia. One of Mrs. Bullard's earliest productions. Rose pink with salmon and lilac tints, large star-shaped flowers with pointed petals; blossoms arranged loosely and gracefully on tall stems. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Aurora. A brilliant orange scarlet. The flowers are of fine texture, somewhat cup-shaped, and arranged closely on the stems. An early blooming variety of rather dwarf habit and one of the best for forcing. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Bessie Schubert. Tyrian pink with lighter shadings and darker on outside of tube. The flowers open well and are loosely and gracefully arranged on tall stems; late bloomer. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.



Fanny Lyon



General Pershing

Bullard's White. Pure white, large flowers with broad petals, early and profuse bloomer; the best white variety; excellent for forcing. Each, 35c; dozen, \$3.50; hundred, \$25.00.

Clementina. One of Mrs. Bullard's earliest productions. A beautiful salmon rose with violet and orange shadings, darker in the throat. A profuse and continuous bloomer, the flowers arranged closely on the stems; of medium height. Each, 25c; dozen, \$2.50; hundred, \$18.00.

Cream Cup. As the name implies, the flowers are cup-shaped and of a creamy white. Fine as a cut flower, adding much to a bouquet of mixed colors. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Diana. Flowers rich lilac-mauve, borne profusely, making a decided showing in the garden and as a cut flower. An early flowering variety and one of the best for forcing. A favorite with everyone. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

Edward D. Sturtevant. A wonderfully vivid shade of orange scarlet. The flowers are large and well formed, with long, somewhat pointed petals, of the finest texture; plants of medium height. One of the most desirable varieties for all purposes, having a long blooming season and making a gorgeous display in the garden. Excellent for cutting. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Estrella. A very distinct variety with beautiful star-shaped creamy white flowers, arranged loosely and gracefully on slender, airy stems, producing a delightful effect in the garden and also when cut for bouquets. The plants grow four to five feet high. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

Eunice. Flesh color, tinted with salmon, a delightful shade. The flowers are star-shaped, exquisitely formed, loosely and gracefully arranged on the stems. Medium height. Each, 35c; dozen, \$3.50; hundred, \$25.00.

Fanny Lyon. Apricot buff, an exquisite shade. Flowers large, borne gracefully on long stems five to six feet high. A profuse and early bloomer, making a gorgeous display in the garden. Each, 35c; dozen, \$3.50; hundred, \$25.00.

General Pershing. La France pink with salmon tints, a delicate and alluring shade. Immense flowers with broad rounded petals; medium height. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

Harriott. Strawberry pink, with delicate violet shadings. A unique and attractive color combination. Flowers with long, well-formed, somewhat pointed petals; medium height. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

Harry Johnson. Salmon pink with orange and purple tints, a very striking color effect. The flowers are large, with broad, rounded, well-formed petals. An early bloomer of medium height. Each, 35c; dozen, \$3.50; hundred, \$25.00.

Hazel. Coral pink with darker stripe through center of each petal and extending down into the throat. Flowers star-shaped; medium height. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Herbert Hoover. A magnificent flower, brilliant salmon pink with orange shadings. Large flowers with long, slightly pointed petals; early and profuse bloomer; medium height. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

J. J. Dean. Rich rose color with violet tints and dark throat. Flower large and well formed, with broad petals, arranged rather closely on the stems. A profuse bloomer, making a splendid display in the garden and one of the best for cutting. Each, 25c; dozen, \$2.50; hundred, \$18.00.

James MacGillivray. Begonia rose with coral tints and dark throat, a pleasing color combination, especially attractive under electric light. The flowers are of medium size, well formed, with pointed petals, and arranged closely and evenly on the spike. A late variety, flowering very profusely; medium height. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Los Angeles. Lilac pink with darker markings toward edge of petals; large cup-shaped flowers; tall grower. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Madame Modjeska. Rich deep magenta. Flowers well formed, with broad petals, quite distinct. One of Mrs. Bullard's early introductions. Each, 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Marion Welsh. Orange vermilion with dark throat, a very brilliant shade. Flowers large, with long, pointed petals, well formed and arranged very evenly on the stem. A very free bloomer and one of the very best. Each, 35c; dozen, \$3.50; hundred, \$25.00.

Mauve. Clear lilac mauve with darker stripe through center of each petal. Immense flowers with broad petals. A late blooming variety of medium height; one of the very best and most distinct of the collection. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Mrs. Ella Birney. Rose color with white markings in throat; cup-shaped flowers; tall grower and profuse bloomer. Each, 25c; dozen, \$2.50; hundred, \$18.00.

Pearl Dickel. White with cream and very faint markings, broad rounded petals; medium height. Late bloomer. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

Roberto. A delicate shade of rose pink, with coral stripe through center of each petal; lilac-rose on reverse side of petals and outside of tube. A large, bold flower with broad petals; tall grower. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

San Diego. Light salmon pink with darker shadings and dark stripe through center of petals; medium height. Each 50c; dozen, \$5.00; hundred, \$35.00.

Santa Ana. Light salmon-orange with darker shading in throat and flame scarlet on the outside of the tube. A unique and distinct shade. Large flowers with pointed petals, arranged rather evenly on the stems and facing upwards. Tall grower and late bloomer. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Smoke. Salmon rose overlaid with smoky violet and coral red in throat and outside of tube; a very unusual color combination; oblong, somewhat pointed petals; medium height. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Theodore Payne. An indescribably delicate shade of salmon-pink. Very large star-shaped flowers of exquisite texture, loosely and gracefully arranged on tall stems. A late bloomer; one of the very best. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Victory. Coral pink with scarlet shadings and dark stripe through center of petals, white markings in throat. Medium sized flowers, arranged regularly on the stems; dwarf habit, late bloomer. Each, 75c; dozen, \$7.50; hundred, \$55.00.

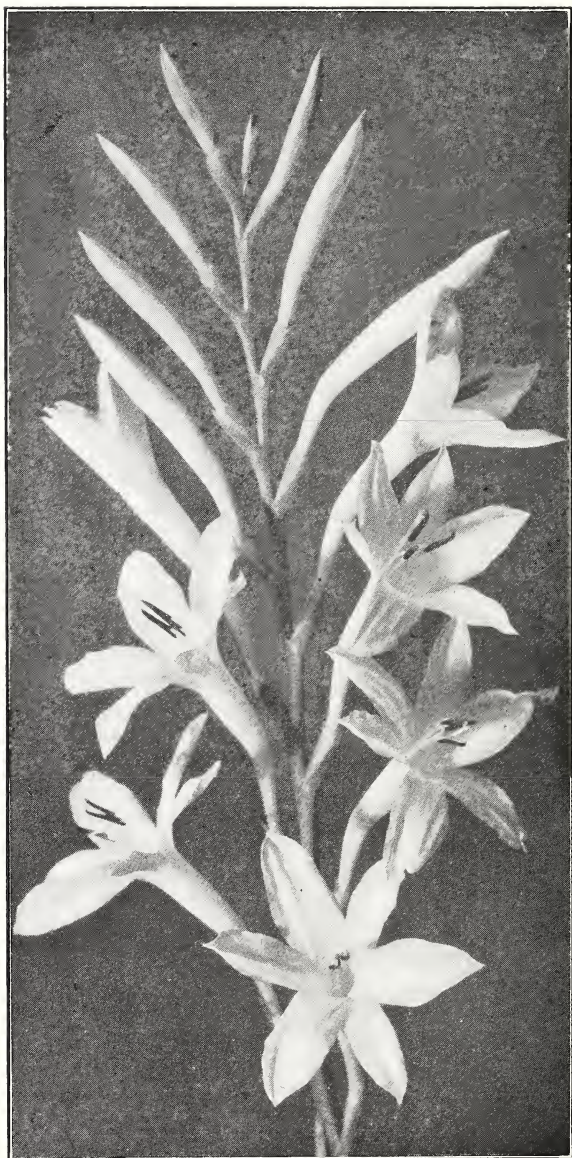
White Star. Pure white star-shaped flowers, arranged loosely and gracefully on long, airy stems. Each, \$1.00; dozen, \$10.00.

Woodrow Wilson. Fiery scarlet; large flowers with pointed petals. The most brilliant of all. Medium height. Each, \$2.50.

Mixed Varieties

Mrs. Bullard's Hybrids Special Mixture. A well-balanced mixture made up largely of named varieties. Each, 35c; dozen, \$3.50; hundred, \$25.00.

Mrs. Bullard's Hybrids Mixed. A general mixture of different colors, containing some of the older sorts and many unnamed seedlings. Each, 20c; dozen, \$2.00; hundred, \$14.00.



Theodore Payne

